

company." We marched down the pike about a quarter mile and formed our lines of battle. There we lay on the ground. We had not lain there more than five minutes until a ball went through Corporal Bartlett's right arm and struck Corporal Long above his left eye. He rolled over and never spoke.

For Captain Ansel B. Denton's C/2/18 and the rest of the 18th Regulars the next few hours would be the most costly of the war. Following the Regular Brigade's dramatic and unsupported stand in the cedars, the Confederates aggressively moved to the edge of the woods and poured a telling fire into the cotton field across which the regulars were withdrawing. Denton sensing the danger yelled, "For God's sake men, get back to the railroad or we will all be killed." Sergeant Flegeal was one of the many men hit and left on the field. Upon retiring to the relative safety of the railroad, Captain Denton could

only account for one man from his company. One of these was Private Kennedy, who pleaded with the reluctant officer to be allowed to return to Sergeant Flegeal. Kennedy had promised Flegeal that if he fell he would return his personal effects to his family in Cleveland. It was a promise he was determined to keep. Denton finally agreed and Kennedy made his way back to the battlefield. He found Flegeal who was lying on the ground, his head in his hands, and his eyes closed.

VOICES OF THE CIVIL WAR

The Premonition of Corporal Thomas C. Long C/2/18th U.S. Infantry

After the creation of the 18th US Infantry on May 3, 1861 nearly 20 months would pass before the regiment lost its first man killed in action. During this time the 18th US actively campaigned through Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama. Yet the Army of the Ohio's path seemed predestined to keep the regiment out of the fighting. At both Mill Springs and Shiloh the 18th US arrived shortly after the fighting had ended. Then during the Siege of Corinth the regiment took part in an assault that found the Confederate positions empty as Beauregard had withdrawn his army during the night. The following pursuit of the rebel army resulted in a brutal campaign that ended with the Battle of Perryville. Here the 18th US occupied a position which afforded it an excellent view of the fighting. For two hours the regiment watched as the left wing of the Federal army fought unsupported. The 18th US and other potential re-enforcements, remained inexplicably idle, while the command structure of Buell's Army of the Ohio failed to act decisively. Private Robert Kennedy of C/2/18 described the action as "...one of the grandest sights I ever saw. Fireworks such as few can describe filled the air as the musketry, firing along both lines, with shells flying in the air and bursting, scattered fire in all directions. The sight was magnificent but very dangerous." During this time Corporal Bernard Connelly B/3/18 was struck severely in the leg by shellfire. Connelly died several days later; the first battle related death of the regiment. In accordance with the army's methods of record keeping in the Civil War Connelly was classified as having died of wounds (DOW). Only men who died on the field were classified as being killed in action (KIA). Outside of his immediate friends Connelly's solitary death probably made little impact on the regiment as deaths to disease and accidents were fairly common. The news of his fate would also have to catch up with the regiment as the army was once again on the move back towards Nashville.

After returning to Tennessee Sergeant Amos Flegeal C/2/18 wrote home to his family saying that I "...have been in the service 15 months and fancy I know as much about military affairs as the common run of our shoulder strapped gents." Flegeal's confidence was not uncommon and while not yet tested in battle the 18th US was certainly a veteran unit that recognized the signs of an impending fight. 2nd Lieutenant Henry Freeman 2/18 who would win the medal of honor for his actions at Stones River wrote after the war: "While we had done no hard fighting, we had interviewed our friends the Rebels often enough to have learned the difference between the *spat* of a bullet that hits and the *sip* of one that misses." On the morning of December 31, 1862 the 18th US now part of the Army of the Cumberland's Brigade of Regulars moved forward along the Nashville pike towards the ominous sounds of a major battle. In his post war memoir Private Robert Kennedy tells of a disturbing incident that occurred on that cold and violent day: The night before the battle, Corporal Thomas Long, my messmate, dreamed that he was the first man killed in the regiment, and that he would never fire his gun. On seeing the sunrise he said, "Bob, this is the last time I shall see the sunrise". As we fell into battle line, I informed Captain Denton of [the] Corporal's strange presentment. The Captain went back to him and said, "Long, do you think you will be shot today?" He answered, "Yes, Captain, I'll never fire my gun." The Captain said, "Long if you think that, fall out and go to the hospital." He said, "No, Captain, I'll die like a man, right with the